

Message Text

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TO USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL NAPLES

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USNATO FOR COLLINS, ALSO PASS TO BODNAR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, PORG, MILL, EUR, XF, SG, XI

SUBJECT: DRAFT REPORT ON SITUATION IN MEDITERRANEAN,
DECEMBER 1977-APRIL 1978

REF: A) USNATO 3018 DTG 221657Z MAR 78 (NOTAL)
B) USNATO 3131 DTG 242007Z MAR 78
C) ROME 4887 DTG 151746Z MAR 78

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1. FOLLOWING IS REQUESTED GUIDANCE FOR APRIL 11-14 AD HOC
GROUP REVIEW OF SUBJECT REPORT. PROPOSED REVISIONS
LISTED IN PARA 3 BELOW ARE KEYED TO DRAFT TEXT (REF A).

2. GENERAL GUIDANCE

A) SOVIET EFFORTS TO GAIN PORT ACCESS. DEPARTMENT CONCURS

WITH MISSION'S COMMENTS AND PROPOSED APPROACH OUTLINED
REF B. (TO ASSIST US REP IN THIS REGARD, WE PROVIDE
BELOW SOME GENERAL TALKING POINTS WHICH MAY BE DRAWN UPON
AS APPROPRIATE DURING AD HOC GROUP SESSION.) IN WAKE OF
OUR MARCH 13 DEMARCHE, WE BELIEVE INITIATIVE PRESENTLY
RESTS WITH ITALIANS TO RAISE AT NATO ISSUE OF SOVIET
REQUEST FOR NAPLES SHIP REPAIR FACILITIES. SHOULD TACTIC

OF EMPHASIZING OUR CONCERN OVER SOVIET ACCESS TO
MEDITERRANEAN PORTS FAIL TO DRAW OUT ITALIANS DURING
EITHER MED REPORT DRAFTING SESSION OR SUBSEQUENT NAC
REVIEW, WE WILL GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO
POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL STEPS SUCH AS THOSE NOTED IN
PARA 3, REF B. FOR PRESENT, HOWEVER, WE WISH TO HOLD
IN ABEYANCE QUESTION OF MORE DIRECT PRODDING
PENDING OUTCOME OF MED REPORT PROCESS.

B) SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS:

-- RESTRICTION OF SOVIET ACCESS TO ISOLATED MEDITERRAN-
EAN PORTS AND PRIMITIVE REPAIR FACILITIES IMPOSES
HARDSHIPS ON THE SOVIET MEDITERRANEAN SQUADRON THAT,
WHILE NOT EXTREME, ARE COSTLY IN TERMS OF MATERIAL
SUPPORT, INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, AND CREW MORALE.

-- ANY INCREASE IN THE CURRENT NUMBER OF AVAILABLE
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SHORE FACILITIES WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVED
LEVEL OF SOVIET READINESS, REDUCE SOVIET AFLOAT SUPPORT
REQUIREMENTS, AND POSSIBLY PERMIT A HIGHER AVERAGE
LEVEL OF SOVIET COMBATANTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

-- ACCESS TO PORTS ROUTINELY VISITED BY NATO WARSHIPS

WOULD IMPROVE THE SOVIET CAPABILITY TO LOCATE AND
MONITOR NATO NAVAL ACTIVITY IN THE REGION, THEREBY
EASING THE BURDEN OF SOVIET INTELLIGENCE COLLECTORS
AND POSSIBLY INCREASING NATO NAVAL VULNERABILITY TO
SOVIET OVER-THE-HORIZON TARGETTING.

-- ACCESS TO PORTS OTHER THAN THOSE IN REMOTE LOCATIONS
NOW FREQUENTED BY SOVIET VESSELS WOULD PROBABLY
SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE MORALE OF SOVIET NAVAL
PERSONNEL ON EXTENDED OUT-OF-AREA DEPLOYMENTS.

BECAUSE SOVIET APPROACH TO ITALIANS INVOLVES MERCHANT
SHIPS AS WELL AS WARSHIPS, US REP MAY ALSO WISH TO
DRAW ON MATERIAL CONTAINED IN AC/127-WP/558 (ECONADS
PAPER ON SOVIET MERCHANT FLEET), PARTICULARLY PARAS

32-39 ON MILITARY AND POLITICAL FUNCTIONS OF SOVIET
MERCHANT FLEET.

C) MALTA: AS IN PAST, US REP SHOULD CONTINUE TO
OPPOSE EFFORTS TO EXPAND ON TREATMENT OF MALTA IN
MED REPORT.

3. PROPOSED REVISIONS:

A) PARA 12: DELETE LAST TWO SENTENCES AND SUBSTITUTE
THE FOLLOWING:

-- "AS FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND MOSCOW,
THESE HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN STRENGTHENED BY A SERIES
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OF HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL AND MILITARY CONTACTS SINCE
LAST FALL. FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM AND THE SYRIAN
CHIEF OF STAFF VISITED THE USSR IN THE AUTUMN, AND
ASSAD'S TALKS IN MOSCOW IN FEBRUARY WERE FOLLOWED BY
ADDITIONAL MILITARY DISCUSSIONS. AS A RESULT OF
THESE DISCUSSIONS IT IS APPARENT THAT SYRIA HAS
RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT IT WILL RECEIVE SIGNIFICANT
QUANTITIES OF NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THE SCALE OF
THE NEW ARMS ACCORDS, HOWEVER, REMAINS UNCLEAR,
ALTHOUGH MOSCOW WILL REPORTEDLY PROVIDE INCREASED
QUANTITIES OF SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING AIR
DEFENSE SYSTEMS."

-- THE ABOVE UPDATES, AND MORE ACCURATELY PORTRAYS
SOVIET-SYRIAN ARMS RELATIONSHIP.

B) PARA 13: FOLLOWING FROM ABOVE, CHANGE PARA 13
TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

--"ASSAD MAY HAVE APPROACHED THE SOVIETS PARTLY AS
A HEDGE AGAINST SADAT'S INITIATIVE. SOVIET MILITARY
ASSISTANCE, MEANWHILE, HAS UNDOUBTEDLY INCREASED
SINCE THE SIGNING OF A NEW AGREEMENT AT THE END OF
1977 (6), AND ACCORDING TO CERTAIN REPORTS, LIBYA HAS
AGREED TO FINANCE SYRIAN ARMS PURCHASES IN THE SOVIET
UNION."

C) PARA 13, ANNEX NOTE (6): DELETE WORD "HOWEVER"

D) PARA 16, ANNEX NOTE (7) (II): CHANGE SECOND
SENTENCE TO READ:

-- "THE PRESENCE OF ONE OF THE NEWEST DIESEL TYPE
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SOVIET SUBMARINES, WHICH MADE THE TRIP UNDETECTED FROM THE NORTHERN FLEET INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN, DEMONSTRATES AN INCREASED SOVIET CAPABILITY TO AUGMENT THEIR SUBMARINE FORCE CONVERTLY."

-- ORIGINAL SENTENCE IS OVERSTATEMENT OF SOVIET CAPABILITIES, BASED ON A SINGLE EXAMPLE.

E) PARA 17, ANNEX NOTE (8) AND PARA 28 NEED TO BE UPDATED. THE KIEV IS NOW IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC PARTICIPATING IN SPRINGEX 78. (SEE NADA/INTSUM/MAR NO 16/ DIA WAS DC/201900Z AND NADA/INTSUM/APR 006/NATO BRUSSELS/060800Z).

F) PARA 19: ADD TO PARAGRAPH LANGUAGE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

-- "SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE HAVE POINTED OUT TO THE TUNISIANS THAT THEIR ACTION HAS STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES ADVERSE TO WESTERN INTERESTS. ALTHOUGH IN RESPONSE THE TUNISIANS MERELY REITERATED THE ECONOMIC MOTIVE FOR THEIR ACTION, AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW WESTERN NAVIES TO USE THE FACILITY, THE REDUCED RATE AT WHICH SOVIET NAVAL VESSELS HAVE BEEN GRANTED ACCESS TO THE DRYDOCK IN RECENT MONTHS MAY BE A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO NATO MEMBER DEMARCHES."

G) PARA 19, ANNEX NOTE (9): ADD:

-- "SINCE NOVEMBER 1977, HOWEVER, THE RATE OF SOVIET USE OF THE TUNISIAN FACILITIES HAS DIMINISHED."

H) PARA 20: FOR CLARITY CHANGE LAST SENTENCE TO READ:

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-- "IN CONCLUSION, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR FURTHER ACCESS, PROBABLY EVEN MORE VIGOROUSLY ON THE DEMISE OF PRESIDENT TITO."

I) PARA 20: ANNEX NOTE (10): ADD:

-- "A SMALL US NAVY AUXILIARY IS SCHEDULED FOR A TWO-WEEK REPAIR PERIOD IN JUNE 1978. THIS IS THE FIRST REPAIR VISIT BY A US NAVY SHIP, AND YUGOSLAV PROBLEMS IN ARRIVING AT A DATE FOR THE REPAIR WERE PROBABLY ASSOCIATED WITH ATTEMPTS TO AVOID OVERLAPPING SCHEDULED SOVIET REPAIR PERIODS."

J) PARA 27: DELETE PHRASE "AT ALL COSTS" IN LAST SENTENCE.

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